



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

WWW.NCPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG

February 5, 2015

TO Superintendents
HR Directors
Accountability Directors

FROM Dr. Rebecca Garland *RG*

Dr. Thomas Tomberlin *tt*

Ms. Carolyn Guthrie *CG*

K-2 ASSESSMENTS

As many of you are aware, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has been conducting an intensive review of all our assessment data that is used in the calculation of student growth (EVAAS). We are currently waiting for SAS to complete its work on the recalculation of student growth for records that were missing from the 2013-14 administration of the North Carolina Final Exams. We are confident that those updated results will be available in the next couple of weeks. The NCDPI is committed to ensuring that the data that support our student growth estimates are of the highest quality.

An important component of maintaining high-quality data is open communication with the districts and charter schools who participate in the educator effectiveness model. During the past few weeks, we have received a number of reports from schools that K-2 teachers have noticed a number of their students were omitted from their student growth estimates. There are a number of legitimate reasons why students are omitted from the calculation of student growth, but our agency works diligently to investigate these omissions to be confident that we are not inappropriately dropping student assessment scores from the growth model.

As a result of our investigations, we have found that a number of students were excluded from the growth calculations in K-2 assessments for the 2013-14 school year. The omission of student records was caused by two separate issues. First, student assessment data were pulled too early in June 2014 and, as a result, many year-round schools' data were excluded from the growth model. Second, NCDPI assigns a flag to students indicating whether they have met enrollment requirements to be included in the growth model. This flag was incorrectly assigned to a substantial number of K-2 students with the result that they were not included in teachers' student-growth calculations. We are unsure why this situation occurred although we think it may have been associated with the conversion to PowerSchool. We are involved in discussions to ensure that this situation does not repeat with this year's data pull.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Rebecca Garland, Ed.D., *Deputy State Superintendent* | rebecca.garland@dpi.nc.gov
6368 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6368 | (919) 807-3200 | Fax (919) 807-3388

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

The NCDPI has maintained that 2013-14 was an "implementation pilot" for developing student-growth estimates for K-2 teachers. As with other pilots, we have indicated that if the data support a state-wide growth model, we will use those estimates in the educator effectiveness model. If the data do not support the model, then we will use the pilot to improve our processes and implement the model the following year. Because of the substantial number of missing records, we cannot be confident that all K-2 teachers' growth estimates accurately reflect the teachers' instructional impact on students. We are confident that the model works, but we are not satisfied with the accuracy of the data pull on which the model was run. Therefore, the NCDPI has determined that we will use the 2013-14 school year as a pilot and **will not** use the student-growth data as K-2 teachers' Standard 6 rating. We will use the K-2 assessment data from the 2014-15 school year as K-2 teachers' first year of data toward their three-year rolling average. As a result of this decision, K-2 teachers will receive their first status at the end of the 2016-17 school year (provided they have three years of valid data).

Furthermore, the NCDPI has decided to retain the EVAAS ratings in the online system so that teachers and administrators may use these data for the purposes of instructional improvement and professional growth. School personnel should use these data cautiously if they have a number of students who have been omitted from their growth calculation. For those teachers who have the majority of their prior-year students included in the growth calculation, the tools in the online EVAAS system can provide valuable insight into which students may need more support in order to improve their reading skills.

Moving forward, the NCDPI has implemented a more rigorous review of the student assessment data that inform student growth, and we are confident that these issues will no longer affect future educator effectiveness measures. The agency certainly regrets any inconvenience this decision might cause teachers and administrators, but we cannot compromise on data quality when the data are used as part of educators' evaluations. If you have any questions about the K-2 assessment data, or student growth in general, please contact Tom Tomberlin (thomas.tomberlin@dpi.nc.gov or 919-807-3440) or the Educator Effectiveness team (educatoreffectiveness@dpi.nc.gov).

RBG/trt

c: Dr. Tammy Howard
Dr. Nancy Carolan